

Across our country, our citizens have voiced loud and clear that Congress must enact the constitutional amendment that restores that right to protect the flag. 82% of Americans support it, 49 states have passed resolutions calling for it, 310 House Members responded in the 105th Congress to pass it, and 61 Senators cosponsored the Senate bill that came just a few votes shy of restoring the power to protect the flag that has been denied for the past nine years.

The 106th Congress must follow through and make the Flag Protection Amendment a reality.

PROTECT CALIFORNIA'S COASTLINE WITH A MORATORIUM ON OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to extend the moratorium on oil and gas development in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the coast of California. This legislation is similar to H.R. 133 from the 105th Congress.

Californians strongly favor continuing this moratorium. The State of California has enacted a permanent ban on all new offshore oil development in state coastal waters. In addition, former Governor Pete Wilson, Governor Gray Davis, and state and local community leaders up and down California's coast have endorsed the continuation of this moratorium.

I believe that the environmental sensitivities along the entire California coastline make the region an inappropriate place to drill for oil using current technology. A 1989 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) study confirmed that new exploration and drilling on existing leases and on undeveloped leases in the same area would be detrimental to the environment. Cultivation of oil and gas off the coast of California could have a negative impact on California's \$27 billion a year tourism and fishing industries.

This legislation focuses on the entire state of California, and would prohibit the sale of new offshore leases in the Southern California, Central California, and Northern California planning areas through the year 2009. New exploration and drilling on existing active leases and on undeveloped leases in the same areas would be prohibited until the environmental concerns raised by the 1989 National Academy of Sciences study are addressed, resolved and approved by an independent scientific peer review. This measure ensures that there will be no drilling or exploration along the California coast unless the most knowledgeable scientists inform us that it is absolutely safe to do so.

I am proud to be working to protect the beaches, tourism, and the will of the people of California. I ask my colleagues to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE SCANLAN

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues in Congress to join me in paying tribute to an outstanding individual, Judge James "Jim" Scanlan. Judge Scanlan recently retired after serving Harris County residents for 21 years on the Probate Court No. 3 bench.

Judge Scanlan, a native of Dallas, landed in Houston after he got out of the Coast Guard in Galveston and could not afford to make it all the way back to Dallas. He worked as an elevator repairman while he earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree at the University of Houston. He decided to run for the Probate Court No. 3 while he was working for the Probate Court No. 2. Judge Scanlan won that first election and has not faced any opposition since.

While the majority of Jim's time was spent hearing cases on wills, guardianships, and estates, Judge Scanlan also spent two days a week for the last twenty one years hearing cases dealing with people with psychiatric problems. He recalled many humorous situations, such as the time there were two people scheduled on the docket—both claiming to be Jesus Christ. But his guiding principle and reason for his success is that he treats everyone gently and with respect.

There have been so many changes in the way society deals with mental illness since Judge Scanlan first started hearing cases. While he marvels at the improvements in medicine, he is most proud of the "miracle that happened" when Harris County replaced the old psychiatric hospital with the Harris County Psychiatric Hospital. That change signaled a real sense of responsibility that people with mental illness need and deserve quality medical care.

Judge Scanlan's decision to retire is definitely a blow to the Harris County community. His 21 years of dedicated service will leave a legacy for future judges. Those people who have found themselves before Judge Scanlan are very fortunate to have benefited from his dedication and understanding of the law.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Judge Scanlan for his service to Harris County. Those of us who know Judge Scanlan are truly grateful for his leadership and wish him well in all his future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO EXTEND THE AVIATION WAR RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, the War Risk Insurance Program has operated successfully for over 45 years. Last year, the program was extended to March 31, 1999. This bill would reauthorize the program for another four and a half years.

Airline insurance is essential to any airline operation. However, commercial insurance

companies will often not insure flights to high risk areas, such as countries at war or on the verge of war.

In many cases, flights into these dangerous situations are required to further the United States' foreign policy or national security policy. For example, in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, commercial airlines were needed to ferry troops and equipment to the Middle East. Commercial airlines would not have flown these flights without the insurance provided through the War Risk Program.

I intend to act promptly on this bill so as to guarantee that the War Risk Insurance Program does not expire.

INTRODUCTION OF DECLARATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ACT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing my Declaration of Official Language Act, a bill I introduced in the last Congress. This legislation establishes English as the official language of government, requires that naturalization ceremonies be conducted solely in English, repeals the federal bilingual education requirements and repeals bilingual voting requirements.

My own State of Arizona is a crossroads for people of all sorts of backgrounds. I am reminded every day that America, like Arizona, has been enriched by the contributions of people from all over the world. This unified nation of immigrants has been made possible because we have a common national tongue—the English language. We only need to look to the nation to our north, Canada, to realize that a common language is not to be taken for granted.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we have not only taken this great gift for granted, but that our government has actively worked to undermine it. Voting ballots, welfare applications and all types of official government documents are now issued in languages other than English.

Recently, USA Today reported that eight immigrants have filed suit in Miami against English requirement for U.S. citizenship. A federal judge may now be able to strike down our long-standing requirement that prospective new citizens must demonstrate a minimum command of the English language. Elderly immigrants are already exempt from this fairly basic standard. This suit was brought because U.S. citizenship is required for full access to certain federal benefits. The attorney who filed the complaint will no doubt argue that since so many government services are already provided in languages other than English, an English requirement for citizenship is unnecessary.

I am not surprised that this case has been filed, only that it was not filed many years earlier. U.S. citizenship was something that immigrants took justifiable pride in earning. They carried their English workbooks with them everywhere. The Clinton Administration's 1995–96 Citizenship USA program effectively waived English requirements in an attempt to naturalize many more voters for the presidential ticket.